

SPOTLIGHT ON ORNAC MEMBERS

AN INTERVIEW WITH ALINE TITIZIAN, RN, BScN.



Submitted by: Catherine Harley, RN, eMBA, ORNAC Executive Director.

Aline Titizian, RN, BScN, is a Perioperative Registered Nurse at the Hospital for Sick Children (SickKids) in Toronto, ON. She began her career at Hôtel Dieu de France hospital in Beirut, Lebanon and received her perioperative nursing certificate from Université Saint-Joseph, in Beirut Lebanon, in 2000. After moving to Toronto, in 2004, she focused her career on paediatric nursing.

What prompted you to get involved in paediatric perioperative nursing?

When I began my career as a perioperative cardiac nurse at Hôtel Dieu de France, which served individuals of all ages, I was always the RN called on for paediatric procedures. My attraction to working with kids began at that time and continued to grow until I arrived in Toronto. I was glad to be offered a position at SickKids because it allowed me to continue the type of work that I had enjoyed so much.

Tell us about your professional development. How did you prepare for working in the operating room in such a specialized area?

In preparing for perioperative paediatric nursing I benefited substantially from the orientation program at SickKids. The program was organized around both clinical and in-class sessions. It prepared me well for this type of work and built on my previous experience and knowledge to help make me a successful paediatric nurse.

Please describe the Perioperative Team at SickKids.

The multidisciplinary perioperative team (surgeons, anaesthesia, nursing, x-ray

techs, neuromonitoring, anaesthesia assistants) at SickKids practices within a progressive environment that provides tertiary/quaternary care for children and adolescents with complex health issues in acute and chronic phases of illness. Our staff are our greatest strength. They work hard to provide a supportive work environment where everyone can give their best.

The team delivers care that has a profound impact on both the patients and their families. The team comprises expert practitioners who provide the best standard of surgical care to children while advancing paediatric practice. They work in a multi-faceted and collaborative environment and are leaders and advocates who pushing the boundaries of practice with innovative models of care and initiatives that improve the care and the lives of children and their families.

Could you walk us through a typical day in the OR at SickKids?

A typical day starts at 7:25 a.m. when nurses check in at the front desk. The three perioperative nurses on duty,

once in the theatre, discuss the allocation of roles. At 7:35 a.m. the “huddle” occurs -- the entire team (anaesthetist, nurses, and surgeon) gathers and plans the day according to the patients’ needs and the procedure requirements. The scrub and circulating nurses check the supplies and instruments sent by central services and cross-reference these with the surgeon’s preference book and the information provided during the huddle. The induction nurse consults with the anaesthesia provider regarding anticipated needs during the case – this includes, but is not limited to, IVs and fluids, arterial line requirements, blood product requirements, warming requirements, and any anticipated airway issues. The induction nurse also prepares the positioning devices.

The induction nurse also, during the pre-operative assessment, works to create a bond with the patient by making use of various strategies that take into consideration the patient’s age and psychological status. The focus is on distraction by doing things such as giving toys or stickers, providing an iPad to play with, asking them about their favourite toy or cartoon character

How we communicate and bond with the child reassures the parents that we will be providing their loved one with the best care possible.

SPOTLIGHT ON ORNAC MEMBERS (cont.)

AN INTERVIEW WITH ALINE TITIZIAN, RN, BScN.

(for the younger kids) and favorite sports (for the older ones). The nurse also reassures and comforts the parents and answers any questions they may have. This pre-operative assessment allows the anaesthetist and the induction nurse to evaluate the emotional state and mental status (for challenged children) of the patient and plan the best strategy for transferring the patient to the theatre. At this time decisions on premedication and presence of the parent during induction are made based on the patient's needs and with the parents' consent and collaboration.

Once in the OR the patient is laid on the bed, induction begins and the perioperative nurse comforts the patient, sometimes by singing a lullaby, telling a story, holding their hand, or cuddling them.

From the start of the day and throughout the case the nursing team analyses, on an ongoing basis, the situation in the theatre and plays a proactive role by anticipating the needs of the various team members.

How do you provide support for your patients' families?

The staff at SickKids provide support to patients and their families by always remaining aware of the pain and anxiety parents feel when they have to trust another person with the care of their child. It is an emotional experience and, for that reason, we need to provide appropriate support.

We have found certain strategies very helpful in helping minimize anxiety. We speak to the patient and their parents based on their level of understanding and in a way that respects their culture and beliefs. During the pre-op assessment we walk both the patient and the parents through the process and what they should expect. By explaining things, such as where the surgery will take

place, where the parents' waiting room is, where to get a cup of coffee, when their child will wake up and what they should expect when this happens, we help to alleviate fear and anxiety.

How we communicate and bond with the child reassures the parents that we will be providing their loved one with the best care possible.

What have been the major challenges involved in working in a pediatric setting?

Working in a paediatric setting presents several challenges that differ from an adult care setting. It is important to note that the majority of the cases we deal with are related to congenital problems and are usually combined with multiple health issues. When dealing with a child's anatomy issues like airway management and IV access become more challenging. The physiology of paediatric patients often leads to desaturation, bradycardia and laryngospasm during induction. Children are at higher risk for hypothermia and hyperthermia and, as a result, very close attention must be paid to temperature monitoring.

The developmental and psychological level of a child depends on the age of the child and varies from patient to patient. Young children often experience separation anxiety and may benefit from the presence of a parent during induction. Teenagers can be very anxious and therefore pre-induction sedation may be beneficial. It is important to use language appropriate to the developmental stage of the child and we often have to adapt for children who do not yet know how to speak or do not speak English. This can make it a challenge to alleviate their fears and understand their needs.

Pharmacology can also be a challenge as the dose of medications or fluids are weight-dependant.



Photo Courtesy: A Titizian

Aline Titizian, RN, BScN

What would you consider the most valuable tools for a perioperative registered nurse?

Compassion, critical-thinking, life-long learning, strong communication skills, the ability to work under pressure, and patient advocacy are the tools I have found necessary throughout my career.

If you could go back in time is there anything you would have changed in your career?

My experiences have all, throughout my 19 years in the perioperative setting, shaped the nurse I am today. I would not change anything about my career.

Any words of advice to nurses interested in working in the paediatric perioperative setting?

Regardless of the challenges and difficulties present in the paediatric perioperative setting it is very rewarding to work with children! I highly recommend it.